

## Annual Dinner

**Recognizing Excellence** ~ Among the legal luminaries who received annual awards from then-president Giles P. Manias at the BAEC's 122nd annual dinner held recently at the Hyatt Regency Buffalo are David G. Jay, 2009's Lawyer of the Year, Hon. Joseph D. Mintz, recipient of the 2009 Outstanding Jurist Award, local attorneys celebrating 50 years of practice, Buffalo attorney Daniel T. Lukasik, recipient of the 2009 Special Service Award, former BAEC president Richard N. Blewett and Joseph B. Mistrett, recipients of the Charles H. Dougherty Civility Award, Robert M. Elardo received the 2009 Award of Merit. [B]



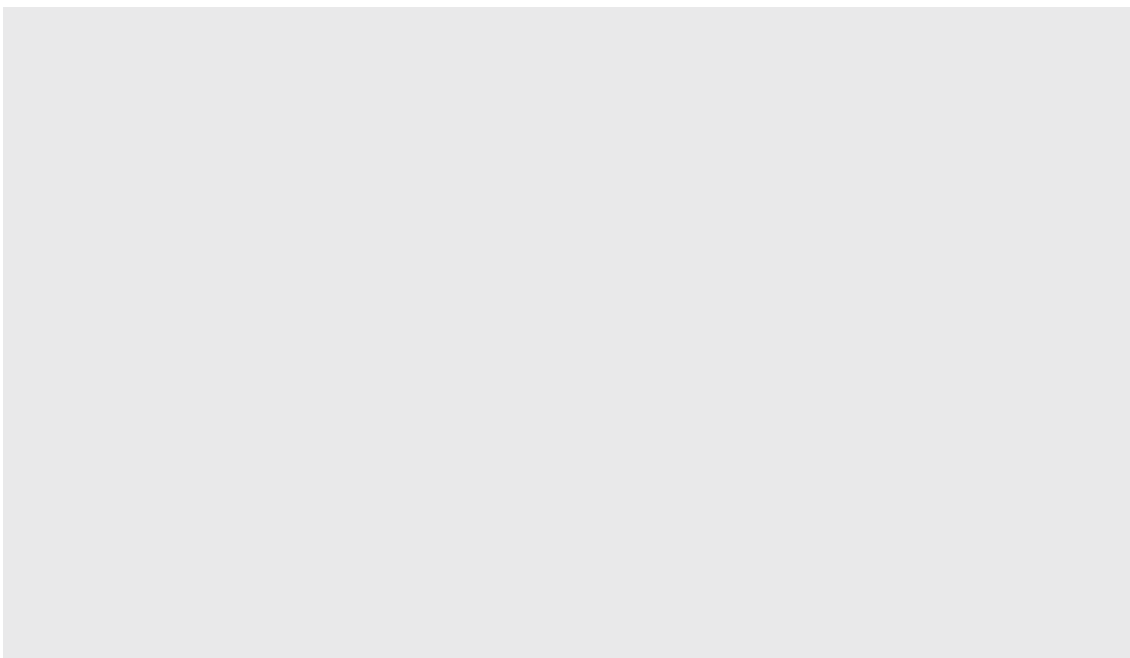
Former BAEC president Richard N. Blewett, at right, and Joseph B. Mistrett, left, received the Charles H. Dougherty Civility Award.



Hon. Joseph D. Mintz, recipient of the 2009 Outstanding Jurist Award



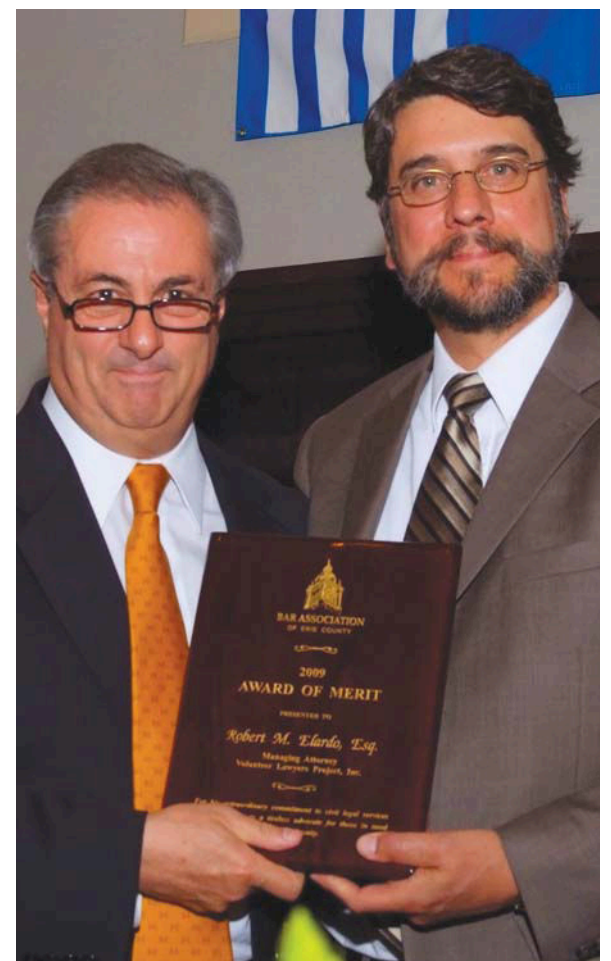
BAEC members celebrating 50 years of practice



David G. Jay, 2009 Lawyer of the Year



Buffalo attorney Daniel T. Lukasik, recipient of the 2009 Special Service Award



Robert M. Elardo received the 2009 Award of Merit.

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## Extras Needed for Documentary

The Bar Association of Erie County's Committee to Assist Lawyers with Depression is in the process of developing a documentary that deals with the connection between the legal profession and depression. The Committee is looking for local attorneys or law students who are willing to volunteer to be extras in the documentary. The documentary is currently scheduled to be filmed here in Buffalo during July and August, 2009.

If you are interested in helping the Committee make the documentary a reality, please contact James O'Keefe at 854-3400 or okeefe@ruppbase.com as soon as possible.



Committee Chair Daniel T. Lukasik recently received the 2009 BAEC Special Service Award. He is pictured above with his mother, who attended the ceremony.



## News from the Lawyers with Depression Committee

Congratulations to committee founder Daniel T. Lukasik upon receiving the BAEC's Special Service Award for his groundbreaking work on lawyers and depression, which has garnered extensive national attention. Lukasik was quoted recently in a *National Law Journal* article about lawyer suicide. The article cites three recent suicides at major U.S. law firms within the past six months and suggests that "factors in the profession that may contribute to suicide have likely grown worse, not better. Lawyers...may be primed for depression because of their heavy workload and legal training that accentuates the negative."

"We really, as lawyers, are dunked into a bath of stress," Lukasik says in the article. He is described as "a trial lawyer whose Web site Lawyers with Depression ([www.lawyerswithdepression.com](http://www.lawyerswithdepression.com)) has seen a 50 percent jump in hits in the past six months."

"You're sitting there stewing in your own stress chemicals and that goes on for years," he says.

An article on Lukasik's Web site quotes Dr. Richard O'Connor, who maintains that "depression is stress that has gone on too long." O'Connor is the author of *Undoing Perpetual Stress: The Missing Connection between Depression, Anxiety, and 21st Century Illness*.

Many people with depression have problems dealing with stress because they are not "stress resilient," O'Connor writes. "It's not some central character flaw or weakness but a complex interplay between genetics and one's experience over a lifetime."

The *National Law Journal* article contends that "lawyers tend to be overachievers whose legal training

and working conditions can contribute to what studies - most notably one by researchers at Johns Hopkins University - suggest is a predisposition to depression and anxiety that can contribute to suicidal thoughts. Although it's impossible to pinpoint the many factors that may lead to suicide, the added stress of the economic downturn could be exacerbating that predisposition and pushing some people too far."

The full article can be accessed at [http://www.law.com/jsp/nlj/PubArticleNLJ.jsp?id=1202430579215&Reports\\_of\\_suicides\\_point\\_to\\_job\\_stress](http://www.law.com/jsp/nlj/PubArticleNLJ.jsp?id=1202430579215&Reports_of_suicides_point_to_job_stress)

### New Blog Makes Information Available More Quickly

Lukasik has also recently launched a depression blog for lawyers at [www.lawyerswithdepression.wordpress.com](http://www.lawyerswithdepression.wordpress.com). In addition to addressing depression, the blog offers up Lukasik's perspectives on stress, anxiety, meaning, spirituality and finding a sense of purpose at work. Attorneys can subscribe to the blog for free via e-mail or RSS feed (full details available online).

While the entire Web site is updated on a monthly basis, the blog is more frequent and immediate. Lukasik expects to post shorter pieces three times each week. He hopes that the blog will help to offer a steady stream of encouragement and options to his colleagues who are struggling with depression and anxiety.

Further information about the Lawyers with Depression support group and its meetings appears elsewhere on this page. [B]

"You're sitting there stewing in your own stress chemicals and that goes on for years"

~ DANIEL T. LUKASIK



## Are You An Attorney Struggling With Depression?

If so, you're definitely not alone. A recent Johns Hopkins study of 108 occupations found that lawyers topped the list of those who suffered from depression. Attorneys were found to suffer from depression at a rate of four times that of the general population.

Depression is a treatable illness and the right combination of medications and therapies can significantly improve the quality of life for those who suffer from it.

Help and support are just a phone call away. The Lawyers with Depression Support Group meets monthly to share stories and fellowship. The group meets every other Friday (except holidays). See the calendar on the back page for meeting dates. Meetings are held at Bar Headquarters, 438 Main Street, Sixth Floor, at 12:30 pm and lunch is provided. There is no need to pre-register.

If you or a colleague are struggling with depression, there is no need to suffer in silence. For further information, visit [www.lawyerswithdepression.com](http://www.lawyerswithdepression.com) or contact Kelly Bainbridge at 628-4892. All calls are strictly confidential. We invite you to join us and share your story.